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ABSTRACT

The annotated bibliography consists of reviews, of three to seven paragraphs each, of nine books focusing on classroom research and the teacher's role in conducting and publishing it. Eight of the books relate specifically to research on English-as-a-Second-Language teaching and learning. Each review provides basic bibliographic information, followed by four kinds of information about the text: the primary audience and purpose; its organization; features that are unusual or might be overlooked; and a brief summary. (MSE)

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Chapter 12

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Teachers and Research: An Annotated Bibliography

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It is typical of an annotated bibliography to review a rather large number of books in an area and give one or two sentences describing each book. This article will review a rather small number of books because fewer books on research methodology are published than books in a content area but will review each book in more detail than is usual for most annotated bibliographies.

The purpose of each review is to give the reader a brief introduction to the book. Each review, therefore, can be considered only a snapshot of the book. While it is not possible to do justice to the complexity of any of these books anymore than it is possible to adequately evaluate a human being on the basis of a snapshot, it is hoped that an idea of the scope of each book plus some sense of the uniqueness of each book will assist the reader in making an informed choice when considering actual purchase. Toward that end, each review will strive toward description rather than prescription. The books are reviewed alphabetically by author.

A total of nine texts are reviewed. A book icon indicates the beginning of a review. The book title is given followed by the author or authors followed by the publisher and the year of publication then by the number of pages. The structure of each review is to list the citation of each book, then divide the review into four parts: the primary audience and the purpose of the book, the organization of the book, extra goodies, namely, features that are unusual or which might be overlooked, and the bottom line or a short summary.

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This annotated bibliography consists entirely of books describing research methodology for teaching English as a second or foreign language. All the books are relatively easy to order and to purchase in Japan. All the books are TESL oriented, and no attempt was made to review books on research methodology from the mainstream content educational field of English speaking countries.

All of these books are helpful. For example they can help you understand research articles in the *TESOL Quarterly* and the *JALT Journal*. A classroom teacher who decides to engage in classroom research needs the experience of engaging in the research process, but in addition also needs the assistance of a guide or consultant. Without the experience of doing hands-on research, the new researcher has no grounding and the explanations in these books tend to sound abstract. Without the help of a guide, however, one tends to get lost. To put it another way, none of these books is a substitute for the experience of working with an experienced researcher. One of the most helpful experiences you can have is taking a course with the author of one of these books at a university or a TESOL summer institute. Furthermore, none of these books reads like a novel (i.e. most are not meant to be read from cover to cover). It is a good idea to approach these books with an actual problem or at least a question. It is also a good idea to read the relevant sections in more than one book as different authors explain their solutions in different ways.

Finally, keep in mind that there is no perfect book on research methodology. Each book reviewed here is a reflection of the author's context, purpose, and understanding of what research is and what new researchers need to know. All of these books are helpful either in whole or in part and there is no book reviewed here that would not be helpful to have in a teacher's personal library.

***Focus on the Language Classroom: An Introduction to Classroom Research for Language Teachers*.** D. Allwright and K. Bailey. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. 250 pp.

Primary audience. This book was written in non-technical language for language teachers with little or no research background. The purpose of the book is to introduce classroom research to inexperienced teachers as well as experienced teachers who are not yet researchers so they can use research techniques to begin to think like researchers in the exploration of their own teaching. This is not, however, a "how-to book." Although including both, it stresses quantitative research over qualitative research, and provides a rather thorough review of research issues.

Organization. The book is divided into five main sections with two chapters for each section. Part one discusses the history of classroom research, part two

discusses what to take into account when starting research, part three discusses oral error, part four is about classroom discourse, and part five discusses student openness and what promotes or inhibits students' openness to learning.

Extra goodies. One of the surprises of this book, to me at least, is that it has two chapters devoted to error analysis. The authors seem to sense, probably rightly, that classroom language teachers are very interested in oral speech errors and how to research them. The background and the issues involved are thoughtfully discussed. The other goodie is the suggestions for further readings which follow each chapter. Each suggestion is a gem and reading them is like having an experienced teacher give you personal, cogent advice on what to read and where to look for it. These suggestions should not be overlooked by teachers new to classroom research.

The bottom line. This book is hefty, but readable. It is especially helpful for teachers in the process of deciding to take a research perspective in their classroom.

Understanding Research in Second Language Learning. **J.D. Brown. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. 219 pp.**

The *primary audience* for this text is classroom practitioners, especially those who are terrified by numbers, charts, tables, and statistics. The aim of the book is to explain basic statistical terms; how charts, tables, and graphs work; and the appropriate use of research design. It is a book for the consumer rather than the producer of statistical studies.

Organization. There are 13 chapters which I, not the author, divide into four sections. The first section, chapter one, sets the tone for the book which is that while statistical studies are not the only kind of research or even the best kind; they are one type and they are useful. The second section, chapters two to four discusses variables and scales (nominal, etc.) which are used to talk about how research is basically designed. Knowledge of these scales will be useful later in the book because they are key to deciding what kind of statistics to use. The third section, chapters five to eight, gives a short background course in statistics. If you have had a good testing course, you can either skip these chapters or use them for review. The fourth section, chapters nine to thirteen, are the heart of the book.

Chapter nine, "Statistical Logic," explains the logic of statistical design. The next three chapters discuss the three major types of statistics: correlation, comparing means, and comparing frequencies. Each chapter has a section on choosing the correct statistic and a chart which uses variables and scales as a way of locating the statistic you might want to use. For example, if your dependent variable is a single interval scale and your independent scale is also a single

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interval scale, where those intersect on the chart you find "simple regression" and "Pearson r," which are two statistical procedures you can use. All these terms and procedures are explained in the chapters in some detail.

Extra goodies. The special goodie for the new researcher is tucked away in chapter five which has the title "Critiquing Statistical Studies" because that is, in fact, the content of the chapter. What that title does not tell you is that there is a complete layout and description of the research article format. Research articles have a set format which cannot lightly be ignored. As a researcher you are expected to know the differences between such categories as materials, procedures, analyses, and results. You are also expected to know where an appendix is placed. Clearly laid out with each category explained and illustrated, this chapter alone is worth the price of the book. Check the format against the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, listed below, because there are slight differences.

The bottom line. A relatively easy to understand book for an introduction to statistics and the logic behind statistical studies. This is a book to refer to when you are at the research design level trying to decide which statistical procedure to use.

Research in the Language Classroom. C. Brumfit and R. Mitchell. London: Modern English Publications in association with The British Council, 1991. 172 pp.

Primary audience. This is not a textbook, in fact, it is not even a book. It is a collection of articles and the target audience is never explicitly stated. The purpose of the book, which is explicitly stated, is to survey major issues in classroom research. The influence of the British Council guarantees that this collection represents a British point of view. What saves this collection from being hopelessly parochial is that the contributors are widely distributed—Canada, Australia, Japan, U. K., and the U. S.; cover a wide spectrum of positions; and are highly qualified.

Organization. There are 12 articles divided into three major sections, references follow each article and there is no index. To give you some idea of the authors and articles, I will list the first five titles with their authors. These five articles constitute the first of the three major sections, General Issues: "The Language Classroom as a Focus for Research" by Brumfit and Mitchell; "The Teacher as Researcher" by David Nunan; "Ethnography: Bandaid, Bandwagon, or Contraband?" by Leo Van Lier; "Researching Classroom Language Learning" by Rod Ellis; and "The I-language Approach and Classroom Observation" by Vivian Cook. These five articles alone would justify the price of the collection.

Extra goodies. This is a rich collection, and I will comment on only four of the articles. The article by Brumfit and Mitchell is as fine an introduction to the

current issues in research as I have read. "Investigating Learners' Language" by Green and Hecht discusses in a very practical way some of the problems researchers will probably encounter. "Classrooms and Display Questions" by Banbrook and Skehan discusses theory-then-research (top-down) and research-then-theory (bottom-up) perspectives, and concludes with some suggestions on how the two could be combined. "Second Language Classroom Research and Teacher Education" by Michael Long continues a discussion introduced by Banbrook and Skehan by outlining problems of second language classroom research and, by implication, what we should be doing.

The bottom line. This is a valuable collection of articles because taken as a whole it deals with issues which are on the research agenda and which novice researches need to be aware of. Those issues are the teacher as researcher, types of research and their applicability, and a rationale for both quantitative and qualitative research design. How these issues are put and the answers that are given will form the new "common sense" of research and the research environment in which we will all have to live.

The Research Manual, Design and Statistics or Applied linguistics. E. Hatch and A. Lazaraton. New York: Newbury House, 1991. 628 pp.

Primary audience. The authors state that their text is for novice researchers, but that is like saying that the complete *Oxford English Dictionary* is for beginning readers. This book on statistics, research, and design is impressive. The purpose of the text is twofold: on the one hand, the authors want to promote statistical literacy as well as statistical production, and on the other hand, they want to promote research planning.

Organization. The book has 14 chapters and five appendices divided into five sections. Section one is on planning your research project, section two is on describing data, section three is on comparing groups, section four is on describing relationships, and section five (the conclusion) consists of five appendices which include statistical tables and lists of the formulas used in the book. Each of the 16 chapters has workbook features at the end of the chapter which includes activities and practice sections. If you are really a novice researcher it is doubtful you can understand these exercises without the help of a more experienced guide. On the other hand, it is not necessary to know the meaning of every word in the dictionary in order to read, even to read rather complicated material.

Extra goodies. In a book such as this, the category of extra goodies does not exist because the book is so vast and complex that most everything is not only there, it is systematically arranged. If, however, we change the topic of extra

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goodies to I'm-glad-to-see-it, then I would nominate chapter 18 titled, "Assumptions of Statistical Tests." This chapter begins with a helpful discussion of reliability and validity, and concludes with assumptions of specific statistical tests as well as sections on solutions when assumptions cannot be met.

The bottom line. This is the mother of all ESL statistical research textbooks and if you are interested in a comprehensive discussion of the statistical procedures used in applied linguistics, this text should be in your library.

Approaches to Research in Second Language Learning. **D. M. Johnson. White Plains, New York: Longman, 1992. 253 pp.**

Primary audience. The primary audience of this text is graduate students in SLA, FL, and bilingual education. This is a first book and no previous knowledge of research methods or statistics is necessary. This book was written to provide an overview of the major approaches to research in second language learning. The author seeks to provide a balance between the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Organization. Six approaches to research are discussed. Three approaches, correlational, experimental, and survey research are more quantitative while the other three, case studies, ethnographic, and multisite and multimethod studies are more qualitative. Two of the approaches will be discussed here.

Chapter 3, on "The Correlational Approach," is 22 pages long and contains an introduction, 9 criteria for analyzing correlational studies, and two sample studies both analyzed using the 9 criteria. Included in the introduction is a definition and example of a correlational coefficient and a discussion of validity and reliability in measurement, but no formulas or statistics are given. This is true for all chapters in this book. The one page conclusion discusses the major advantages and disadvantages of correlational research. The chapter ends with 30 reference citations.

Chapter 6, on "Ethnographic Research," is 27 pages long and is organized in a fashion similar to the chapter on correlation. The introduction discusses types and uses of ethnographic research, a section titled "Doing Ethnographic Research" discusses the role of theory, field techniques, and analysis. Ten criteria for assessing ethnographic reports are given with a sample study analyzed in detail using the criteria. The chapter ends with 65 reference citations.

Extra goodies. This book has many surprises. Each chapter has outstanding references. There is a chapter on the teacher-researcher movement and an appendix listing resources. The purpose of the chapter on teachers as researchers is to explore questions rather than propose answers. Questions are raised such as: Why do teachers see present research as irrelevant?, What is a teacher-

researcher?, and What are the goals of teacher-researchers? Do not skip the appendix, which is in three parts. First, it lists indexes and abstracts through which you can locate articles by topic or author. Then it lists reviews of research literature on particular topics, and finally a list of 33 journals each of which is briefly described.

The bottom line is that this is a good "getting started" book, especially if you are not clear on the various types of research. Because it covers the main types of research in EFL today, it might be a book to look at when you are at the stage of forming your research question.

***Understanding Language Classrooms: A Guide for Teacher-initiated Action*. D. Nunan. London: Prentice Hall, 1989. 183 pp.**

Primary audience. The target audience is teachers who are new to research. The purpose of the text is (a) to introduce educational—as opposed to linguistic—issues to ESL audiences, (b) to introduce the ins and outs of looking at classrooms, and (c) to present classroom research as a teacher renewal tool. Nunan uses (b) to accomplish (a) and (c).

Organization. The book is divided into seven chapters followed by three appendixes. After chapter one which gives a context, the remaining chapters group themselves into pairs. Chapters two and three are on who to look at (chapter two on teachers and chapter three on learners), chapters four and five are on methods of investigation or ways of looking (data collection and classroom observation methods), and chapters six and seven are on professional development or why look at all. Chapters three and four are especially important. Chapter three presents a readable discussion of three of the most important issues for teachers: SLA, tasks, and learner strategies, while chapter four discusses qualitative data collection methods such as diaries, field notes, interviews, and protocol analysis.

Extra goodies. Appendix C is an introduction to statistics. Statistics bother language teachers. If we had wanted to study mathematics, we would have become engineers. This appendix explains basic ideas as well as some current statistical application such as t-tests, analysis of variance, chi-square, and factor analysis. If these are strange sounding words, this appendix provides an introduction.

The bottom line. This is a basic book, but the seeds are all there. If the whole idea of research makes you ill, start with this book. If this book were taken seriously by a substantial number of language teachers, it would be a radical book with revolutionary consequences.

Research Methods in Language Learning. **D. Nunan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 249 pp.**

Primary audience. This book is for practitioners in the field as well as graduate students. No previous knowledge of research is presupposed. The text was written to introduce research methods and tools, to prepare classroom teachers to understand and to critique research papers, and finally to help new researchers develop their own research strategies.

Organization. The book can be divided into two parts. The first part, chapters one to four, discusses research methods (experimental, ethnographic, and case study). The second part, chapters five to eight, discusses research techniques (classroom observation, introspective methods, elicitation techniques, and discourse analysis).

Nunan covers a broad range of issues and what you notice depends largely on what you are looking for. I appreciated his discussion of reliability and validity in chapters three and four, his discussion of surveys and use of questionnaires in chapter seven, and his discussion of discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and interaction analysis in chapter eight.

Chapter 10 concludes the text by discussing how to develop a research question and how to conduct a literature review—two problem areas for new researchers.

Extra goodies. This book has at least two extra goodies. The first bonus is a glossary of terms and the second is a chapter on program evaluation. Nunan provides a glossary of some 60 key terms used in research such as action research, ethnography, reliability, stimulated recall, and variance. This glossary is helpful to new researchers because these terms can not be found in a standard dictionary.

The second bonus is a chapter on program evaluation. Teachers have a strong stake in program evaluation, but generally they are not well trained in program evaluation which makes chapter nine welcome. Nunan's rationale for including this topic in a research textbook is that evaluation of an institution's program is, by his definition, research. Nunan discusses the difference between evaluation and assessment. He also includes a sample design for an evaluation study as well as an example of a case study.

The bottom line. This text summarizes information in lists and charts as well as giving clear examples and is especially helpful in its discussion of validity. This is a well balanced text which introduces major research areas and research techniques.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association **(4th ed.). Washington: American Psychological Association, 1995. 368 pp.**

Primary audience. Authors who prepare manuscripts for graduate level classes or for publication. There are many reasons to have this manual in your library: (a) Both JALT and TESOL follow APA which means that all manuscripts submitted to them must follow the APA manual, (b) in addition, most major journals in our field follow APA or a modified version of APA, (c) the manual is very complete and not only gives detailed examples of how to reference almost anything you can think of, it also gives instructions for issues such as use of abbreviations, quotations, numbers, footnotes as well as how to make figures and tables.

Organization. Seven major sections covering everything you ever wanted to know about writing a paper.

Extra goodies. Not applicable.

The bottom line. Don't fight it, just order it! You won't be sorry. Order from your bookstore or write to: Order Department, American Psychological Association, P.O. Box 2710, Hyattsville, MD 20784 U.S.A.

Second Language Research Methods. **H. Seliger and E. Shohamy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989. 270 pp.**

Primary audience. According to the authors the book is intended for teachers new to research, but my impression is that it is not a text for complete beginners. This would be a text for a class with an experienced teacher or for new researchers with access to more experienced researchers who would be willing to act as mentors.

Organization. There are 10 chapters with chapters one and two serving as the introduction, and chapter 10 serving as the conclusion. Chapters three and four are a context to research, chapter five discusses the research plan, chapters six and seven discuss research design and chapters eight and nine discuss data collection and analysis. If I were to give this book a subtitle, it would be "formulating a research plan," in that, the authors believe that preparation is key to research. The text includes a thorough discussion of the differences between quantitative and qualitative research although one gets the feeling that in their hearts the authors prefer qualitative research. References are given after each section which sometimes causes certain articles to be referenced more than once. For example, Michael Long's article titled "Inside the Black Box" is referenced three times, once on page 112, once on page 134, and again on page 199.

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Extra goodies. This is a tightly organized and interwoven text so that little tends to be overlooked. Nevertheless, I found the appendix reference for further reading to be helpful.

The bottom line. Reading this book is like hacking your way through a dense jungle and finding the treasure. While this book would not be in my small bag of 10 books to take to a desert island, it would be in my larger bag of 30 books. This is a standard text in the field by two very competent researchers, and it is unusual to read an article on second language research that does not reference this book. Key works to describe this book would be solid, turgid, insightful, and required. It is helpful when you are considering a research perspective or looking for guidance for a specific problem.